

CLAIMS

We claim

1. A method of regulating the body weight of an individual comprising the steps of:
 - (a) providing the individual with information disclosing that consuming dietary calcium and/or dairy products is associated with one or more health effects selected from loss and/or reduced gain of weight and/or fat, and/or metabolic consumption of adipose tissue, and
 - (b) providing the individual with a dietary plan for consuming products containing an effective amount of dietary calcium and/or dairy products sufficient to induce the one or more health effects.
2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising determining consumption of dairy and/or calcium-containing products by said individual, and formulating a dietary plan for consuming products containing an effective amount of dietary calcium.
3. The method according to claim 1, further comprising preparing an analysis of the individual's dietary intake of calcium and/or dairy.
4. The method according to claim 1, further comprising monitoring the calcium or dairy consumption of the individual and/or monitoring the weight of the individual.
5. The method according to claim 2, wherein the determination of the average daily consumption of calcium and/or dairy comprises obtaining information about the amounts and types of foods consumed by the individual.
6. The method according to claim 2, wherein the information is obtained by having the individual answer questions over the internet, and the information is analyzed by a computer after input of the data by the individual, and the information is compared to a database containing the nutritive values of the foods, and the nutritional composition of the diet of the individual is provided, including the amount of calcium consumed, and further comprising providing recommendations regarding increases in the amount of calcium consumed by the individual if the amount of dietary calcium consumed is suboptimal.
7. The method of claim 1, further comprising determining the weight and the height of the individual.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising calculating the body mass index of the individual and comparing the body mass index of the individual to established norms.
9. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing the individual with information relating to the benefits of maintaining a normal weight.
10. The method of claim 1, further comprising monitoring the calcium or dairy consumption of the individual and/or monitoring the weight of the individual.
11. The method of claim 1, further comprising implementing the method over a communication network comprising inputting weight values on a web page and comparing the values with a database available on the Internet.
12. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing the individual with products containing therapeutically effective amounts of calcium.
13. The method of claim 1, wherein the dietary plan comprises maintaining the individual on a restricted caloric diet.
14. The method of claim 1, wherein the individual is obese.
15. The method of claim 1, wherein the individual is moderately overweight.
16. The method of claim 1, wherein the individual has lost weight and is preventing or reducing weight regain after weight loss.
17. The method of claim 1, wherein the products containing calcium comprise dairy products.
18. The method of claim 1, wherein the products are selected from the group consisting of milk, yogurt, and cheeses.
19. The method of claim 1, wherein the products containing calcium comprise foods fortified with calcium.
20. The method of claim 1, wherein the products containing calcium comprise a dietary supplement.
21. The method of claim 1, further comprising gathering and analyzing information regarding dietary habits and/or food consumption of the individual.
22. The method of claim 1, wherein the amount of dietary calcium in the dietary plan is at least about 1000 mg/day.
23. The method of claim 1, wherein the amount of dietary calcium in the dietary plan is at least about 1346 mg/day.

24. The method of claim 11, wherein the dietary plan includes at least about 57 portions of dairy products per month.

25. A method of inducing a metabolic change in an individual comprising the steps of:
- (a) providing the individual with information disclosing that increasing consumption of dietary calcium from suboptimal amounts is associated with a metabolic change, and
 - (b) providing the individual with a dietary plan for consuming products containing amounts of dietary calcium sufficient to induce the metabolic change, the metabolic change being selected from decreasing intracellular calcium concentrations ($[Ca^{2+}]_i$), stimulating lipolysis, inhibiting lipogenesis, increasing the expression of white adipose tissue uncoupling protein 2 (UCP2), reducing serum insulin levels, thermogenesis, and/or decreasing the levels of calcitrophic hormones.

26. A method of diagnosis and treatment of obesity comprising the following steps:

- (a) determining the weight and, optionally, the height of an individual;
- (b) comparing the weight, or optionally the weight/height ratio, of the individual to established norms;
- (c) optionally, classifying the obesity of the individual;
- (d) optionally providing the individual with information relating to the benefits of maintaining a normal weight, or a normal weight/height ratio; and
- (e) providing the individual with a dietary plan containing high levels of calcium and, optionally printed matter disclosing the obesity-control benefits of a high calcium diet.

27. A computer implemented method of diagnosing, treating, and/or monitoring obesity comprising the following steps:

- (a) determining the weight and, optionally, the height of an individual and inputting these values into a computer system;
- (b) optionally calculating the weight/height ratio of the individual;
- (c) comparing the weight, or optionally the weight/height ratio, of the individual to established norms contained in a weight and/or weight/height database

available to the computer;

(d) optionally classifying the obesity of the individual to Group I, Group II, or Group III obesity;

(e) optionally providing the individual with information relating to the benefits maintaining a normal weight, or optionally a normal weight/height ratio;

(f) providing the individual a dietary plan containing high levels of calcium and, optionally printed matter disclosing the obesity-control benefits of a high calcium diet; and

(g) optionally monitoring the progress of the individual

28. The method according to claim 27, wherein step (a) is carried out by input of the data on a web page.